

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Clean Energy for Tomorrow

Paula Dobriansky, Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs

The world needs affordable and clean energy to fuel economic growth, development, and democracy without harming the environment. The United States is confronting this challenge with transformational technologies, creativity of entrepreneurs, and support for local initiatives in the developing world.

Ensuring access to ample, affordable, clean, and sustainable sources of energy is unquestionably one of the greatest challenges facing the modern world. The U.S. government and America's private sector and nongovernmental organizations are confronting it by building on a long tradition of clean energy research to develop transformational technologies that will reduce our reliance on oil and have far-reaching benefits for the entire world.

By embracing the energy challenge, the United States is working to promote energy security, reduce poverty, reduce harmful air pollution, and address climate change. These efforts often strengthen self-governing societies by building a culture of democracy at the grassroots level.

The Energy Challenge

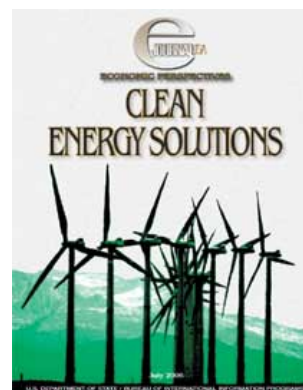
Rarely does a day pass without an energy-related issue making the headlines. Whenever world leaders meet, energy is an important and urgent topic of discussion. From the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development to the 2005 Gleneagles Group of Eight (G8) Summit to the 2005-2007 energy cycle of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, energy is front and center. And for good reason. Supply disruptions

and rising prices loom large in day-to-day decisions about how we fuel our vehicles, heat our homes, and power our businesses. What's more, approximately 2 billion people—nearly one-third of the world's population—lack access to the modern energy services that are essential for bringing schools into the 21st century, driving industry, moving water, and boosting crop production, as well as for lighting, heating, and cooling health facilities. [...]

Meeting the Challenge

The United States is pursuing a clean energy future that rises to the significant challenge before us. Our approach draws upon the best scientific research, harnesses the power of markets, fosters the creativity of entrepreneurs, and works with the developing world to meet our dual aspirations for vibrant economies and a clean environment.

*Full article available at
U.S. State Department eJournal
Clean Energy Solutions (July 2006)*



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What is climate change?

<http://www.earthday.net/>

The term climate change refers to global changes in temperature, wind patterns, and precipitation. These changes are being driven by a gradual warming of the Earth's atmosphere (commonly referred to as global warming). The Earth's climate has been changing slowly over the centuries. Cold periods have alternated with warm periods. However, these changes have been happening at a much faster and devastating rate in recent years. The 1980s and 1990s were the warmest decades on record. Science indicates that this acceleration is due to human activity.

*"...a truly global threat."
Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the
UN, referring to climate change
November 2004.*

The Earth's atmosphere traps heat escaping from the surface of the planet, which keeps us warm. Carbon dioxide, part of the mixture of gases in our atmosphere (called greenhouse gases), is very good at trapping heat. Some of the greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere from nature every day. For example, carbon dioxide enters the atmosphere daily from decaying plant matter and forest fires.

In the past, natural processes could handle the amounts of greenhouse gases generated, and the system remained in balance. In recent decades, however, human activity through increased use of fossil fuels and cutting down of forests has been overloading the natural processes. Greenhouse gases are now being generated by the burning of fossil fuels to run cars and factories and heat buildings, as well as by industrial processes. These releases of greenhouse gases have shifted the atmosphere's natural balance.

For a listing on **Environmental Issues Internet resources**, please log onto
www.usembassy.fi/resources/environment.htm



*Earth laughs
in flowers*

*Ralph Waldo
Emerson, 1847*



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